

P-3008/CI-92-1261 ORDER ACCEPTING REPORTS, REQUIRING FURTHER  
FILINGS, AND PROHIBITING EXPENDITURE OF SPECIFIED SUMS

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Don Storm  
Tom Burton  
Marshall Johnson  
Cynthia A. Kitlinski  
Dee Knaak

Chair  
Commissioner  
Commissioner  
Commissioner  
Commissioner

In the Matter of Commission  
Recommendations to the 1993  
Legislature on Future Provision  
and Maintenance of  
Telecommunications Services to  
Communications-Impaired Persons

ISSUE DATE: September 21, 1993

DOCKET NO. P-3008/CI-92-1261

ORDER ACCEPTING REPORTS,  
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**PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

On February 26, 1993 the Commission issued an Order in the above-entitled case requiring the TACIP<sup>1</sup> Board to implement a billing and collection system for intrastate and incoming interstate calls placed through its state-wide message relay service by January 31, 1994. The Order also required the Board to file quarterly reports on its progress in complying with that directive.

On March 31, 1993 and July 19, 1993 the Board filed its first two quarterly reports. The reports stated the Board's goal is to implement a billing and collection system in December 1993, but described significant obstacles to achieving that goal.

The reports came before the Commission on August 31, 1993.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

One of the most intractable technical problems faced by the TACIP Board has been finding a billing and collection system for

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<sup>1</sup> "TACIP" stands for Telecommunication Access for Communication-Impaired Persons.

intrastate<sup>2</sup> and incoming interstate toll calls. During TACIP's early operations, every billing system examined by the Board cost more to use than the amount of toll charges it would collect. The Board elected to absorb these charges rather than incur additional expense to collect them. While the Commission appreciated the logic of this decision, it found that basic fairness required the Board to make every effort to develop a workable, cost-effective billing and collection system. The Commission began requiring regular reports on such efforts in late 1990. The March 31 and July 19 reports are the latest in that series of reports.

The March 31 and July 19 reports state the Board has discarded earlier plans to work with the Minnesota Department of Administration and MCI to establish permanent and interim billing and collection systems and is instead exploring the possibility that its next message relay service provider can also provide billing and collection services.

The Commission continues to believe that basic fairness, and the public perception of fairness, require that persons making toll calls through the message relay service pay toll charges. The Commission will continue to require quarterly reports under the February 26 Order. Those reports are the most straightforward means of ensuring that the Commission remains informed on Board efforts to establish a billing and collection system.

The Commission notes that \$131,500 of the TACIP budget for fiscal year 1994, which the Commission approved on July 14, 1993, was earmarked for implementing a toll billing and collection system. The Legislature's stated willingness to examine the practicality of establishing such a system, should the Board's difficulties continue, makes it conceivable that that line item will not be necessary in Fiscal Year 1994. The Board has assured the Commission it will place the funds in reserve for their intended use, and the Commission will so order.

Finally, the Commission will accept TACIP's March 31 and July 19 reports as being in compliance with the February 26 Order.

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<sup>2</sup> The intrastate toll charges at issue are those which would have been incurred had the call been placed directly, instead of through the message relay service. The Board properly absorbs intrastate toll charges incurred to route local calls through the message relay service in St. Paul.

ORDER

1. The Commission accepts the quarterly reports filed on March 31 and July 19, 1993 as in compliance with the requirements of the February 26, 1993 Order.
2. The TACIP Board shall continue filing quarterly reports, as required under the February 26, 1993 Order, on its progress in implementing a billing and collection system for intrastate and incoming interstate toll calls.
3. The TACIP Board shall place in reserve, pending further Commission action, the \$131,500 of its budget earmarked for implementing a billing and collection system for intrastate and incoming interstate toll calls.
4. This Order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Susan Mackenzie  
Acting Executive Secretary

(S E A L)